

To: Commerce Township Board of Trustees

From: Commerce Township Planning Department
David Campbell, AICP – Planning Director
Paula Lankford - Planner

Date: September 6, 2023

RE: September 2023 Monthly Planning Department Report
(covering July 28, 2023 through September 6, 2023)



Development updates

- **Five & Main** - Robert B. Aikens & Assoc. (Bruce Aikens) received the necessary approvals from the Planning Commission and Township Board at their respective meetings on July 10 and August 8 for a collection of changes to the Five & Main mixed use development. The PUD plan was amended mostly to relocate the development's residential component, a new site condominium was created allowing the developer to sell condominium units to partner developers, and the Commerce Towne Place condominium was amended to contract Unit 14 and expand Unit 13 to provide adequate space for the parking and drive aisles of the residential component. The residential partner looks to be Continental Properties, who intend to build up to 300 apartments within 9 buildings on a 12.5-acre condominium unit adjacent to the Walmart property. Continental will require site plan approval from the Planning Commission, which is being targeted for the PC's regular meeting on October 2. As part of the site plan approval, Continental and Aikens are to submit a plan for which of Five & Main's shared improvements (traffic signal, driveways and drive aisles, municipal water, sanitary sewer, stormwater management, landscaping, etc.) will be completed as part of Continental's portion of the project. Continental hopes to break ground in Spring 2024.
- **Bay Pointe golf club site** – The Chaldean Catholic Church recently purchased the Bay Pointe property. Their hope is to build a new church facility near the northeast corner of Union Lake Road and Richardson Road, while retaining a 9-hole executive course that would be operated by the Shenandoah Country Club and would retain the existing club house/banquet center. The Church intends to provide vehicular access to the church site via the existing private driveway on the north side of Richardson (which would continue to serve the golf course) along with a new access along the east side of Union Lake Rd, potentially in alignment with Woodspur Dr. The Township hopes to schedule a meeting soon with the Church, the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC), the Township's Traffic Engineer, and the owners of the Commerce Drive-In site to discuss the traffic impacts along the Martin-Richardson-Union Lake corridor. The Township is asking the Church to pray extra hard for fewer bottlenecks at Richardson and Union Lake.
- **Commerce Drive-In site** – As referenced above, Insite Commercial (Randy Thomas) on behalf of the Thomas/George Family submitted a concept plan for a mixed-use development on the former Commerce Drive-In site located on the south side of Richardson Road between Martin and Union Lake Roads. The proposal would include senior independent living apartments in a 3-story building on the southerly half of the property, with up to four commercial outlots

along the Richardson Road frontage. Two shared driveways are envisioned along the south side of Richardson, with the easterly of the two aligning with Union Lake Rd such that the intersection of Richardson and Union Lake would become a 4-legged signalized intersection. The concept plan was included for preliminary discussion at the Planning Commission's regular meeting on August 7. Not surprisingly, the bulk of the conversation was related to traffic, but also the potential for residential (attached senior independent apartments) on a property zoned commercial.

- **Home Depot** (355 Haggerty Road) – At the Planning Commission's regular meeting on August 7, the PC made a determination that limited year-round accessory outdoor storage/sales/display can be considered "an accessory use customarily incidental to the principal permitted use" for a home improvement store greater than 100,000 sq ft. However, the PC had many concerns about the preliminary outdoor storage plan that Home Depot was proposing. Home Depot's representatives subsequently met with a workgroup made up of three PC members along with the Planning Director, and based on that discussion submitted a revised site plan where they relocated much of their proposed outdoor storage, limited it to certain durations, and enclosed portions of it within removable fence enclosures. Home Depot's revised site plan will be included on the Planning Commission's agenda for Sept. 11. Until the Planning Commission has an opportunity to take action on Home Depot's site plan, Home Depot has limited their outdoor storage on site and moved their large rental equipment (trailers, skid steers, trenchers, chippers, etc.) to a different store. One of the Planning Commissioners wanted to ask "Why don't you rip out all the cash registers that are never open and use that space for storage?" but he bit his tongue.
- **A&A Solutions** (Lots 12 & 13 of Claran Industrial Park) – A&A Solutions proposes to utilize Lots 12 & 13 in Claran Industrial for rental space for storage of RV's, boats, trailers, vehicles, etc. within an enclosed and secure storage lot. The properties are zoned Industrial, and "rental space for the storage of vehicles such as travel trailers, motor homes, recreational vehicles, campers, snowmobiles, boats, and similar facilities" is a special land use in the Industrial zoning district per Article 23 of the Zoning Ordinance. A public hearing for the special land use has been scheduled during the Planning Commission's regular meeting of Sept. 11.

Zoning Map & Zoning Ordinance Amendments

- **Articles 6 & 39** – The Planning Commission and Township Board are expected to see a collection of "housekeeping" amendments to Articles 6 and 39 of the Zoning Ordinance during their respective meetings on September 11 and 12. The proposed amendment to Article 6 is intended to clarify the methodology by which waterfront setbacks are calculated, and the amendments to Article 39 are intended to clarify that lawful nonconforming accessory structures can be expanded in a manner that does not increase their nonconformity.

Master Plan update – The working draft of the updated master plan is ready for distribution for the State-mandated 63-day review by adjacent communities, Oakland County, public utilities, etc. At their meeting on September 11, the Planning Commission is expected to submit the updated Master Plan to the Township Board who, at their meeting on September 12, could

approve the distribution. Neither the PC nor the TB would be approving the final Master Plan, but would instead be distributing the draft for comments as required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. The intent is for the Planning Commission to approve the updated Master Plan by year's end. In the meantime, Planning Commission Chair Brian Parel has asked for multiple copies of the Master Plan to pass out at his next MSU tailgate party, where it can be expected they will be used as kindling to set couches on fire.

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)

Due to lack of petitions, the ZBA is expected to cancel their regular meeting scheduled for September 28, 2023. When notified of the cancellation, Trustee Rick Sovel was heard to say "What am I supposed to do with all this paella?!"

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission's regular meeting of August 7, 2023 included the following:

- A use determination for outdoor storage/displays/sales at the Home Depot store at 355 Haggerty (discussed above).
- Review of a concept plan for the Commerce Drive-In site (discussed above).

The Planning Commission held a special work session meeting at 5:30pm on August 7 dedicated to the Master Plan update. They all said they're going to really miss those work sessions once the Master Plan is adopted in December.

The Planning Commission's next regular meeting is scheduled for September 11, 2023 at 7pm and will include the following:

- A public hearing for outdoor storage on Lots 12 & 13 of the Claran Industrial Park (discussed above).
- A public hearing for an amendment to Articles 6 and 39 of the Zoning Ordinance (discussed above).
- An amended site plan for Home Depot to include specific locations and durations for outdoor storage, displays, and sales (discussed above).
- PC Secretary Joe Loskill performs a medley of the late great Jimmy Buffet's greatest hits (not discussed above so as to avoid overwhelming Ticketmaster)
- Planning Commission consideration of submitting the updated Master Plan to the Township Board for the Board's Sept. 12 approval of distribution to surrounding communities for the Master Plan's 63-day review